

## CONCLUDING NOTE

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The Second International Conference on Environment and Society in Transition carried the integration of knowledge and policy a long step forward by focusing upon World Priorities. Public policy is an act of stepping into the future, and future events are "estimated" rather than "known." As the members of the Conference emphasized at every meeting of a working group and at every plenum the policy implications of knowledge are matters of judgment. If judgments are to be other than capricious and arbitrary an act of judgment must be disciplined by procedures that include the contextual consideration of norms, facts, and estimated futures.

The Conference is part of an institution building process in which both the American Division of the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS) and The New York Academy of Sciences are engaged. The task is to establish close and continuing relations between scientific and professional knowledge and action by public authorities. Where scientists and professionals can assert themselves as citizens (as well as officials) the responsibility of academies, universities, and research institutes is especially important. It is essential and appropriate to report regularly on world priorities, and in this way to provide a well-thought out map for the consideration of all concerned.

It has become increasingly clear that if our judgments of priority are to be based on realistic assumptions, they must be made in the context of an inclusive, selective, and provisional map of the past, present, and future of environment and society. Further, it is evident that the probable realism of world policy is improved when they evolve in the course of a program that includes an informed review and appraisal of public policy in a wide range of fields.

Judgments of priority are no exception to the principle that a decent regard for the opinion of others is an important element in a collective process of decision. Weight must be ascribed to the judgments expressed by individual scientists in reply to private questions about their ranking of world priorities. In preparation for the Second International Conference we therefore gathered replies to questionnaires circulated to a preliminary sample of scientists and professionals in many countries. It is important to continue and to improve surveys of this kind, which should be sponsored by organizations that decide to issue revised priority recommendations from time to time.

As scientific, professional, and official bodies take more regular responsibility for the choice of policy priorities, they will be challenged to clarify the basic assumptions on which they proceed in reference to the preferred quality of life. Members of the Conference called attention to the point that an authoritative preliminary effort has been made to define the appro-

priate norms for the world community in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which outlines some implications of the overriding goal of human dignity. (The specifications of a model of human indignity can be found in Nazi programs for non-Aryans.)

Contemporary specialists are actively engaged in selecting and utilizing at least partial indicators of the quality of life. Exercises of this kind are indispensable means of translating the ambiguities of prose into explicit references to society and environment.

The policy papers that were prepared by the working groups of the Conference may be reclassified in various ways in order to emphasize important considerations of objective and tactic. For example:

#### I. Policy priorities related to world institutions.

A. Policies designed to speed up the dissemination and maintenance of a realistic common map of world institutions, population and environment. The mapping process is intended to enable all who would play a useful part in policy formation and execution at both official and unofficial levels to keep their own assumptions under review.

B. Policies designed to achieve a more responsible framework of world public order.

C. Policies designed to foster selective development and to reduce inequalities between and within countries.

#### II. Policy priorities relating to world population and environment.

A. The balancing of food requirements and population size is a priority problem in both immediate and long-run perspective.

B. A comprehensive system of priorities is necessary if world policies toward environment are to be coherent and cumulatively effective.

C. Priorities toward energy sources and arrangements aimed at abundant energy without waste.

Many suggestions by Conference members were intended to encourage next steps toward strengthening the impact of knowledge institutions on public policy. Academies, universities, and institutes do not at present use a common channel to report their activities at the several phases of public policy. It would be useful to obtain from these institutions in a routine way a publishable account of their policy initiatives (and effects). A simple questionnaire like the following indicates what is meant:

Has your organization publicly proposed a list of "world policy priorities" or of "national policy priorities"?

Was the report at your own initiative, or at the request of an official agency?

Has your organization published a report on "world policy goals" or "national policy goals"?

Has your organization published "reviews" or "recommendations"?

concerning national or international policy toward environment (or toward any chosen sector of public affairs)?

Are any of the above in prospect during the coming year?

The Conference perceives each of its activities, and those of similar organizations, as steps toward realizing the aspirations expressed by Lord Ritchie-Calder toward "Mankind's Second Chance."